THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM) : (a) and (b) The Government has seen the news report and are aware of the contents.

(c) Various reports suggest popularity of Indian herbal medicines in global market. No official survey has, however, been done. Efforts are on to sensitise industry to conduct such a survey.

(d) The industry has agreed to have a committee chaired by the President of Confederation of indian Industy and co-haired by Secretary, Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy to address all matters relating to herbal medicines, to advise member units to grow medicinal plants, open ISM and H dispensaries and introduce Yoga in works/offices. The industry is also assisting in developing publicity materials for propagation abroad. More collaboration with the industry would open up after Medicinal Plants Board is set up.

Spread of Hepatitis 'C'

4309. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item, ''Hepatitis 'C' spreading due to unscreened blood'', appearing in the Times of India dated 7th April, 2000;

(b) if so, the Government reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to discontinue the collection of blood from unscreened donor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) The Government is proposing to start madatory testing for Hepatitis 'C' virus in all blood banks at the earliest. In this connection the following steps are being taken to start mandatory testing for Hepatitis 'C' :—

(i) Technical specifications for the proposed HIV/ELISA Kits has been drawn by a Technical Committee.

(ii) The procurement process for Hepatitis 'C'/ELISA Kits has been started.

(iii) Necessary changes to Drugs and Cosmetics Rules is being made so that Hepatitis 'C' testing becomes a Statutory requirement.

(iv) Nationwide training programme for training two functionaries from each of the 815 blood banks supported by NACO has started.

Reimbursement for Treatment at Apollo Hospital

4310. SHRI ANIL SHARMA : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the expenditure incurred on treatment of CGHS beneficiaries as out door patients in Apollo Hospital, New Delhi is reimbursable by Government; if so, the extent to which it is so reimbursable, and

(b) if not, the reasons and the relevant rules in this behalf ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM) : (a) Indraprastha Apollo hospital is recognised under CGHS for availing of treatment/investigation in OPD or indoor treatment with prior approval of the competent authority on completion of the prescribed formalities. The expenditure on account of treatment is reimbursed to the beneficiaries in accordance with the orders issued by the Govt. vide O.M. Nos. S. 11011/6/96-CGHS(P) dated 11-6-97 and S. 12020/4/97-CGHS(P) dated 7-4-99.

(b) In view of (a) above the question does not arise.

Grant-in-aid for State Illness Assistance Fund

4311. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the States which have so far set up the State Illness Assistance Fund;

(b) the details of grants-in-aid released to States from the National Illness Assistance Fund during the last three years; and

(c) the main criteria for determining the amount of grant-in-aid to be released to a State ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM) : (a) and (b) The following States/UTs have set up Illness Assistance Fund and Grant-in-aid released to them, year-wise, are as under :—